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CAUSES FINANCIÈRES DE LA RÉVOLUTION FRANÇAISE.

or of the town. The author shows that these lotteries, with some few notable exceptions, were not generally as productive as their promoters had hoped.

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Les Causes financières de la Révolution française. Par CHARLES GOMEL, Les Ministères de Turgot et de Necker. Pp. xxxi., 548. Paris: Guillaumin et Cie. 1892.

In order thoroughly to understand the Revolution and its work, it is now recognized on all hands that we must forget for a time the conditions of to-day and, as De Tocqueville has urged, *aller interroger dans son tombeau la France qui n'est plus*. The undertaking is beset with difficulties. The eighteenth century furnishes problems for the historian which can only be solved by the laborious methods incident to a study of the obscurest periods of the Middle Ages. Since De Tocqueville first attempted to "penetrate to the core of the Ancien Régime," a number of works have appeared which aimed to give a picture of the conditions immediately preceding the Revolution, and the interest in this period appears to be steadily increasing. No subject deserves more careful investigation than the old financial system of France, for here we find the best concrete expression both of the immediate and remote causes of the Revolution.

The volume before us is the first of two which the author designs as an introduction to a contemplated financial history of the Constituent Assembly. Distracted by a thousand pre-occupations, this body must necessarily have relied, in determining upon the reforms to be introduced, upon the sentiments of the public and the solutions of problems suggested in the preceding years. The history of their work is thus bound up most intimately with persons, writings and events of the past. "An impartial account of these events and aspirations can alone account for the immense significance of the reforms they accomplished, as well as the enormity of the faults they committed."

M. Gomel begins with a succinct account of the financial straits of the government during the period immediately succeeding the Seven Years' War, the opposition of the courts to the king's policy, and their anomalous espousal of the popular cause. The literature of the time, so far as it relates to taxation, receives careful attention. The main part of the volume relates to the period from 1774, when Turgot was called to power, to the resignation of Necker in 1781. M. Gomel's style is lucid and attractive. He treats the subject broadly, furnishing us the data for following the history of the times by short but careful de-

scriptions of the then existing fiscal institutions. He never hesitates to explain technical terms, doubtless at the expense of much patient thought, but saving thereby infinite perplexity to a reader left to determine their meaning inductively.

The chapters are accompanied by careful analyses, and we hope that the author will adopt a practice but too rare among his countrymen—that of supplementing his work with an index.

Readers of the present volume will look with interest for that promised upon the second period of Louis XVI.'s reign.

J. H. R.

English Trade and Finance Chiefly in the Seventeenth Century. By W. A. S. HEWINS, A. B. Pp. xxxv. and 174. London: Methuen & Co. 1892.

The story of England's constitutional development has proven so absorbing to England's historians, that they have devoted themselves chiefly to this aspect of her history. It is of comparatively recent years only that attention has been given to the conditions and causes which lay often times at the root of these striking political changes. A work upon English economic history can hardly fail to be welcome, even if it contains little that is new, and the conditions under which it is published preclude original investigation.

The work of Mr. Hewins forms one of University Extension Manuals published by Methuen & Co. In it we look for a popular statement of familiar facts. It is, however, gratifying to note that the author has made a larger use of hitherto unpublished or neglected materials than was to have been expected. This does not prevent the work from being in the main a condensation of the work of previous writers, notably Cunningham and Thorold Rogers, a fact which, it should be added, the author in no wise attempts to conceal. The author has done his work well, and his little book will no doubt create an interest in English economic history, in circles which the ponderous tomes of other writers would utterly fail to reach.

Mr. Hewins is at his best in the introduction, where he gives a general survey of economic literature during the period covered by his work. It is a convenient summary of the works which were published during the era, and gives an excellent idea of the prevailing tone of these writings. The body of the book is made up of chapters on monopolies, trading companies, the working classes and commercial treaties, the chapters being, as the author tells us, a part of a university extension course in economic history. Trading companies are treated at some length, and we find instructive notices, not only of the prosperous East India Company, but especially of the less successful